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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Albania

SUBJECT Organization of State Medical Care/Categories of Citizens/Procedures for Each Category/Documents Required/Rural Health Conditions

PLACE ACQUIRED (BY SOURCE) Tirana/Letaj (near Kukes)

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Organization of State Medical Care

2. "First, a chart to show the organization of state medical care in Albania. [See next page]

Legend For Chart

The Poliambulanca is at the disposal of the citizens of Tirana and of the villages in the surrounding region. There is no Poliambulanca in other regions.

The Spitali Pergjithshem Civil (Unified Civilian Hospital), Aruga Bairam Curri, Tirana, is the only hospital which serves the needs of the citizens of Tirana and of the Tirana region and its villages. Similar civilian hospitals (obviously with less medical apparatus) exist in the capital of each region in Albania. Within each political region, the civilian hospital acts also as the Poliambulanca.

There is an Ambulanca in each of the three raions of the city of Tirana. They serve also the Tirana region and its villages. Similar Ambulanca exist in other regions. No other medical assistance or ambulance service exists in rural Albanian villages.

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Categories of Citizens

3. "Regulations governing medical treatment in Albania should be divided into four categories, to apply to:
 - (a) Persons NOT employed by state organizations (Government's 'field of labor') and who will never get work because they are considered reactionaries (reaksionares). All farmers are in this category.
 - (b) Persons who have been employed by state organizations and have been dismissed because of reductions in personnel--having thus the right to other jobs if and when the Seksioni Kuadrit of the Party decides.
 - (c) Persons within the Government's field of labor who are actually working.
 - (d) Special cases.

4. "It should be emphasized that throughout the whole of Albania no physician is authorized to perform private treatment. This holds true also for those physicians employed by a state institution, such as a plant or office enterprise.

Note: The following descriptions apply to Tirana, but the basic document procedures hold true elsewhere/.

CATEGORY (a)

5. "For treatment of any minor ailment, such as a bruise or cut or minor sickness, any person may apply to the Ambulanca of the raione in which he lives. The Ambulanca is staffed by a medical attendant but not by a physician. The procedure is simple. Medical attention and medication is given free of charge to anyone. The person applying for such minor treatment need not produce his Letra Njofteimit (Identification Card). After treatment is administered, the attendant requests only the name, surname and address of the patient.
6. "If a person needs dental care or more serious medical treatment, he may apply to the Poliambulanca. The Poliambulanca in Tirana has all sorts of medical departments and X-ray apparatus. In the one at Tirana there is a chief physician and physicians in charge of each medical department. A person applying at the Poliambulanca for treatment is given by the porter (portier) at the door a white ticket bearing a number for the department concerned. The numbers run in series. When his number is called, the person must produce his personal Identification Card (Leter-Njofteimit) at the Sekretari (each physician has one). All personal data is taken down from the Identification Card. After medication, payment is made at the Sekretari. In 1952 the charge for pulling a tooth was 30 lek; the charge for a filling was 200 lek; any medical visit cost 100 lek. If a person needs medicine, the physician issues a medical prescription on paper that bears the Poliambulanca letterhead. Prescriptions may be filled at one of the three Farmacias in Tirana:

- No. 1 -- Rr. Bajram Curri
- No. 2 -- Rr. 28 Nandor
- No. 3 -- Rr. Bajram Curri

The prescriptions must be paid for. (I do not know any prices of medicines.) Neither streptomycin nor penicillin are prescribed by physicians. If a patient needs one of those antibiotics, and if he can afford it, the physician makes the injection directly at the Poliambulatorium. I do not know the exact cost of these antibiotics, but they are fantastic--something like 5000 lek /for an injection???. If the physician feels the person needs hospitalization, he is issued a Raport-Mjeku (Medical Report) for the hospital.

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7. If a person needs hospitalization, he can apply directly to the hospital. He must ask for the Doktor Roje (Duty Physicians), who determines whether he needs hospitalization. But hospitalization depends upon availability of vacancies. Priority is given to persons in Categories (b) and (c) [see below]. A person with a Raport-Mjeku from a Poliambulanca must report to the Seksioni Informacionit at the hospital. Priority for hospitalization holds true in his case, as in the one above he has lowest priority. If a person succeeds in obtaining hospitalization, he must make a deposit of 1000 lek and must present his Identification Card, from which personal data is copied. Final payment is made when the patient is discharged from the hospital.
8. If a person is in urgent need of hospitalization (e.g. if he is at his home), he can call an ambulance - Ndihma e Shpjete. These are red autoambulances, American make. There are only two in Tirana: one at the Poliambulanca and one at the Spitali Perjithshem Civil (Unified Civilian Hospital). These ambulances also pick up persons seriously injured in traffic accidents. Hospitalization is given, regardless of whether the patient can afford it. But, when the time comes for discharge, if he cannot afford the payment (even if his case was due to a traffic accident), he is not discharged. He is sent to court, tried and sentenced to payment of his hospital bills. If he still cannot afford payment he is sentenced to compulsory work for a certain number of days (based on the length of his hospital confinement and on the medicines issued him) in a State enterprise. This means hard work. The judge determines the length of the sentence.

CATEGORY (b)

9. For a person who has been dismissed from his job with a Motivacion-Pune (Dismissal document) which entitles him to future employment and who has no relatives whatsoever within the Government's State's field of labor (who would thus get Sigurimi Shqonor - health insurance), the same procedures apply, in case of sickness, as in Category (a) [Paragraphs 5-8].

Note: The Motivacion-Pune is typewritten on white paper that bears a firm name as heading. The paper is about 5 3/4 ins by 8 1/4 ins. Sample:

Republika popullore e Shqiprise Tirane / / 195.....
Kombinati Tekstilit Stalin
(Seksioni Kuadrit)
Nr.Prot.

MOTIVACION-PUNE

Nepunsi X.....nga data e socme pushohet
puna per shkurtim kuadri, me te drejte pagese 15 dite
perpara.

Shefi Seksionit Kuadrit K. Stalin
(signature)

10. If a person in this category, possessing a Motivacion-Pune, has a relative (who must reside with him in the same house) who gets the Sigurimi Shqonor (Health Insurance) then the same procedure applies as for Category (c) below--persons employed by state enterprises.

CATEGORY (c)

- From the moment a person begins work in the Government's field of labor--in a State institution, enterprise or plant--he receives (in approximately five days) a membership Identification Card of the Syndicate to which the State institution, enterprise or plant and the category of the worker belong. This card is issued by the Sekretari i Sindikates (Secretary of the Syndicate - office within the personnel section of the respective institution) of each plant. It entitles the bearer to social insurance benefits (Sigurimi Shqonor). The issue of this card is an automatic, obligatory procedure whenever a person is hired in a State enterprise. The bearer has 3% of his total monthly take-home pay deducted thereafter. For example, a schoolteacher belongs to the Sindikata Arsimit - Kulture (Education and Culture Syndicate).

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12. "The Flete-Sigurimi (Social Insurance Slip) is the only document issued to a state employee to cover his medical care. There are no permanent Social Insurance Identity Cards. The issue of the slip is a simple procedure. It does not require the presentation of particular documents. The State employee (worker or salaried executive) goes to the personnel section (Seksionit Personelit) of his enterprise and fills in himself a form asking his personal data. The form is handed to an employee of the personnel section who stamps it and sees that it is signed. The signature must be that of the director (of a plant) or the kryetar (of the institution)--not the chief of the personnel section. Each Flete-Sigurimi bears a number in the upper left hand corner underneath the heading. That number is the number of the plant or institution concerned. For example, the Ministry of Education uses the number 64. The Flete-Sigurimi is printed on white paper. Each state enterprise has its own heading on similar forms. The document does not bear any registration number in the outgoing mail. The following is a copy of a sample Social Insurance Slip. It is printed on white paper, about 5 3/4 ins by 8 1/4 ins. It states that worker (name and surname to be filled in), born one (date) at (place), son of (father's name), working at (name of department, etc.) is to be given a medical examination, and for that purpose the present document is being issued. Following is only a sample, for the City People's Board:

KOMITETI EKZ.K.P. QYTETIT
(Sigurimi Shognor)

Tirane...195..

(number) FLETE-SIGURIMI

Nepunesi X..... i dt. lindjes.....
lindun ne.....i biri inepunes prane ketij
Dikasteri, kalon ne viziten mjeksore per te cilen i leshohet fleta
e sigurimit Shognor.

PER KOMITETIN EKZ.K.P. QYTETIT
K R Y E T A R I

P.Sh. stra e bardhe me shtampe (
e vkefshme prane Poliambulances signature

stamp

13. "The employee, after filling in the Flete-Sigurimi, informs his direct supervisor (section chief etc.) that he is going to the doctor. He goes then to the Poliambulanca (in Tirana, the Komitet Ekz.K.P. Qytetit-Tiranes, Blv. Shqipria e Re). The porter there hands him a white ticket bearing a number (for priority order). When his number is called the person enters the office and hands his Flete-Sigurimi (Social Insurance Slip) to the secretary of the doctor who is to treat him (i.e. specialist in his ailment). The bearer of the Flete-Sigurimi (if it has been issued in his name) is not requested to identify himself with the Leter-Njoftimit (regular citizen's Identification Card). The secretary enters in the registry--but without putting a registration number on the Flete-Sigurimi--the data shown on the Flete-Sigurimi, i.e. name of institution, number of institution, information given concerning bearer. The person then has his medical visit. After the visit the doctor writes on the back of the Flete-Sigurimi his personal notes: date of examination, diagnosis and number of days the man is entitled to rest because of sickness. The doctor signs the slip and stamps it with the stamp of the Poliambulanca. This completes the medical visit. The worker returns to the personnel section of his institution and surrenders there the Flete-Sigurimi. Then he can go home and rest for the period of days authorized by the doctor. The medical visit was naturally free of charge.

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14. "If the doctor decides during the visit that the worker needs medical treatment, he writes his prescription on a Report - Mjeku Perte Sigurim (Medical Report for Sick Persons). The prescription form bears the stamp and signature of the doctor of the Poliambulanca. It must be taken to any one of the three pharmacies in Tirana [see Paragraph 6]. The medicines prescribed are issued free of charge.
15. "If the doctor decides that the worker needs hospitalization, he then issues a Report - Mjeku (Medical Report) [see Paragraph 6] in Category (a), Paragraph 6.7 He writes on the back of the person's Flete-Sigurimi the fact that he does need hospitalization. The person goes to the hospital, hands over the medical report and social insurance slip and is hospitalized. The hospital takes care of informing the personnel section of the state institution or enterprise where the person works. When the person is discharged from the hospital, he receives back his Flete-Sigurimi, on the back of which is written the period of hospitalization. No fees are charged for this hospitalization. The worker must then present the Flete-Sigurimi to the Sigurimi Shoqnor (Social Insurance Office) of the Ministry of Health, Blv. Sh. e Re, Tirana, where he receives a payment of wages based on days hospitalized. [To report to this office is the procedure for a citizen of Tirana].
16. "Following are the social insurance regulations for the payment of sickness benefits. During the first seven days of sickness the worker of a State enterprise, plant or institution receives his full pay (100%). Thereafter, payment during sickness and hospitalization proceeds thus:
 - (a) For an employment period of less than two years: 25% of monthly wage. Previous employment periods are not considered.
 - (b) For an employment period of two to five years: 50% of monthly wage.
 - (c) For period of employment over five years: 75% of monthly salary.

I am certain that sickness benefits continue to be paid for as long as two or three years if necessary.
17. "Whenever a worker needs urgent medical attention (or if he has a fever, for instance, and cannot get to the Poliambulanca himself), he, or his relatives, may phone the Poliambulanca and report the case. It must be stressed to the Poliambulanca that the sick person is in the Government's field of employ and thus carries insurance. A doctor will come immediately, even at night, if the case is serious. The document procedures for medical care and hospitalization, if necessary, are as above [Paragraphs 11-15]. The doctor himself calls for an ambulance if transportation to the hospital is urgent. All expenses are borne by the Sigurimi Shoqnor.
18. "If a worker just needs minor treatment he reports to the Ambulanca, which handles him the same as any other citizen. Ambulanca treatment is free of charge to any citizen and does not require documentation.
19. "The Flete-Sigurimi (Social Insurance Slip) entitles to the same rights and medical treatment--except for wage payments--any relative of the worker who lives with him in the same house, i.e. in a family nucleus: even a sister- or brother-in-law if in the family unit. This holds true also for Category (b), if the bearer of a Motivacion-Pune has a relative in the same house who gets the Sigurimi Shoqnor. The procedure is simple. The worker has obtained from his place of employment the usual Flete-Sigurimi bearing his name. This slip is taken by the sick relative to the Poliambulanca. The same documentation is required as would be for the worker, except the relative must identify himself with his Leter-Niojftimit (Identification Card), from which all personal data is copied. [If the bearer of the Flete-Sigurimi is the person to whom it was actually issued no Identification Card is required]. The relative's relationship to the worker, whose name is on the slip, is written on the back of the slip. The relative's name and surname are also written there. Thereafter the procedures are the same, and the relative is entitled to free medical care, hospitalization and medicines.

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CATEGORY (d)

20. "This is the category for special cases--the privileged cast of the Communist regime:

- (a) Members of the Kuvendit Popullor (People's Parliament)
- (b) Members and candidates of the Komiteti Qendor Partis Punes Shqipris (Central Committee of the Albanian Labor Party).
- (c) Ministers and vice-ministers.
- (d) Directors of plants, institutions and cooperatives.
- (e) Members of Institutes of science (writers and poets).

21. "These privileged persons get special medical attention and single rooms in hospital. A personal doctor is assigned only to them if they are sick. (I know nothing further about the medical treatment of persons in this Category).

Medical Conditions in Rural Areas

22. "The sanitary and medical conditions in rural Albania are terrible.
23. "There is no doctor in any Albanian village. The nearest medical aid will be an ambulanca in the nearest town ('locality'). This ambulanca will be in the charge of an infermier-primitiv--a medical attendant who has had a six-months' accelerated medical course. Thus, there are the following ambulanca in the Kukes region: at Bicaj, Kala e Dudes, Krume, Shishtevec and Far.
24. "No farmer gets social insurance benefits. Thus he has no right to free medical care beyond that extended at the ambulanca to any citizen.
25. "There are no Poliambulanca\$. In the capital city of each region there is one hospital, which acts also as a Poliambulanca. Thus there are civilian hospitals in the following cities:

Elbasan	Korce
Pogradec	Permet
Lushnje	Berat
Gjinokaster	Vlona
Sarande	Durres
Himara	Tepelene
Fier	Kavaje
Shkoder	Kruej
Shijake	Peshkopi
Puke	Lesh
Kukes	Tirana

Each hospital has only one ambulance, which must handle all calls for traffic accidents, first aid and emergency cases. Since the roads and communications in Albania are terrible, the Kukes ambulance, for instance, can only get to the town of Bicaj; the other roads in that area are not good for cars, only horses.

26. "I know that in the Kukes region any farmer who needed medical care at the civilian hospital in Kukes had to pay for the visit in the same way as described for Category (a) above /Paragraphs 5-8/. He is not hospitalized until he has paid a deposit of 1000 lek. If he cannot afford payment nobody cares for him. It is his own business. Due to this virtual lack of medical attention, to malnutrition, to poor hygiene about 50% of the people in the region of Kukes have TB."

-end-

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